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MEMORANDUM FOR:

STAT

This is the memorandum I phoned
about this morning.

Drexel Godfrey

NIMA REVIEW COMPLETED

24 Feb '67

(DATE)

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WHICH MAY BE USED.

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24 February 1967

Talking Paper on: "Peking Supplying Cargo Ships
to North Vietnam"

1. This memorandum was self-initiated and co-ordinated with ORR. It establishes that the recently identified new class of light cargo ships (AKL) in DRV waters is being built in South China. The memorandum details the characteristics of the ship and instances of sightings in North Vietnam. It also reviews recent Chinese Communist naval aid to Hanoi.

2. The main conclusions are that these ships are being built by the Chinese expressly for the use of the DRV, that they will significantly increase North Vietnam's capability to support the war in the South, and that they are being rapidly produced under a priority program.

3. Routine internal and external dissemination
is recommended within the restrictions imposed by the
classification of the paper.

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[REDACTED]



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

PEKING SUPPLYING LIGHT CARGO SHIPS
TO NORTH VIETNAM

Top Secret

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
24 February 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Peking Supplying Light Cargo Ships to North Vietnam

Summary

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[redacted] analysis of a newly identified class of light cargo ships operating in North Vietnamese waters during the recent "truce" periods indicates that they are being supplied by Communist China. The units are equipped with light armament and can carry approximately 200 tons of cargo. None of these ships, which are being constructed at a rapid rate in a South China shipyard, has yet been observed operating in Chinese waters and it appears that at least for the present they are being constructed solely for use by the DRV. [redacted]

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[redacted] at least 14 of the ships are operating in North Vietnamese waters.

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Characteristics

3. The ships are about 125 feet in length, have a beam of approximately 20 feet, and appear to have a steel hull. They seem to have a maximum speed of about 17 knots--considered fast for a cargo ship--and are equipped with light armament. It is estimated that they can transport about 200 tons of cargo.

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[redacted] these ships have a shallow draft. This would enable them to travel close to the shoreline, which would make them useful for seaborne infiltration activities.

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Chinese Naval Aid to the DRV

7. The introduction of these ships into the North Vietnamese fleet marks a new stage in Peking's recent naval aid to Hanoi. Since October 1965, the only known naval aid by Peking to Hanoi has been four Chinese-constructed Shanghai-class fast patrol boats (PTF). At least two of the Shanghai-class PTFs supplied to the DRV are a modified version which the Chinese have been producing in considerable numbers since early 1965. The modified Shanghai boat measures 130 feet in length, and some are armed with both 37-mm. and 57-mm. twin-mounted deck guns.

8. The exact number of the new class of light cargo ships now in the DRV is at present unknown.

Conclusions

9. The rapid rate of production and the fact that at least 14 of these cargo craft are already deployed in North Vietnam suggest that this is a high-priority program. The absence to date of any evidence that they are being used in China suggests that the new ships are being produced at present solely for the North Vietnamese, who lack the capability to construct such craft. Their speed, shallow draft, and light armament suggest that they are being built specifically to overcome the problems met in the transport of supplies to southern North Vietnam, the DMZ area, and South Vietnam. Their addition to Hanoi's fleet will significantly increase

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North Vietnam's capability to support the war effort in the South. The appearance of these ships in North Vietnam coincides with the heavy losses of supply craft suffered recently by the North Vietnamese as a result of increased US coastal interdiction efforts.

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